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THE HONORABLE DARRELL ISSA

Tribute to Major Vernon R. Buss

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual who selflessly risked his life to save the life of a terribly injured Marine, former Staff Sergeant Irving Saunders. Our country has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated Marines who willingly and unselfishly risk their lives to keep our country safe.

We recognize Vernon R. Buss for his meritorious actions on the Guiana Airstrip, Samar Island, Republic of the Philippines on the 24 January 1945, while serving as a ground maintenance mechanic, aircraft wing. On this day while performing maintenance duties in connection with operation against Japanese forces in the Philippines, Corporal Vernon Robert Buss, United States Marine, put the life of another Marine over his own. While assisting in the rescue attempt of a crashed aircraft and its crew, Corporal Buss singlehandedly extracted the unconscious and burning body of Staff Sergeant Irving Saunders from the wreckage of a burning F4-U Corsair. With total disregard for his own safety, Corporal Buss rushed to the side of Staff Sergeant Irving Saunders and carried him away from the burning aircraft, the burning pools of gasoline, and the random detonation of .50 caliber ammunition as it "cooked off" from the Corsair's burning ammunition supply.

Corporal Buss carried Staff Sergeant Saunders to safety, rendered first aid to him, and facilitated his evacuation to a hospital where he was treated for life threatening third degree burns over an estimated forty percent of his body. We recognize Corporal Vernon Robert Buss for his fearless personal initiative, professional dedication and sagacious bravery on 24 January 1945. His actions reflect the meritorious credit upon his person and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

On behalf of the people of the United States, Congressman Darrell E. Issa, Major General Michael R. Lehnert, Commanding General Marine Corps Installations West, and all veterans who have served with courage and honor, we commemorate your service.